DIVINE CONTEMPLATIONS, NECESSARY FOR THESE TIMES.

BY H. I.

PSAL. 60. Ver. 1, 2.

O Lord thou hast cast us off, thou hast broken us, thou hast been displeased, O turn thy self to us again.
Thou hast made the land to tremble, thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof for it shaketh.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

DIVINE Contemplations necessary for these times.

IT is the generall complaint of this kingdom, that the land lyeth under many and grievous pressures. And certainly, they are so great, so heavy, that men complain not without cause. Look upon the kingdom already wasted and rent with civil warre, and at this time in a new combustion in diverse parts thereof; it will easily appear (that if God of his mercy prevent it not) totall and inevitable ruine and destruction must of necessity follow.

In the meane time we cannot but with grief of heart foresee, that which by wofull experience we have already seen, felt, and heard what sad effects an unnaturall warre will produce: as seck-

ing and plundring of cities and townes, firing of houſes, profaning of ſacred places and things, deflouring of virgins, defiling of wives, widows, and matrons; killing of people of all ſorts, Nobility, Gentry and Commons, young and old, in a word, committing of all kinde of wickednes, inhumanity and cruelty. Inſomuch as this land which formerly hath been accounted a Paradiſe, is now like to become a rufull ſpectacle to all other Nations.

And may we not juſtly take up a further complaint, when we ſee God threatneth us (as he did his own people of old) *to break our ſtaff of bread* (under which is comprehended all neceſſary proviſions for the ſuſtentation of man) *and to make the heaven to be to us as iron, and the earth as braſſe: to ſend the evil arrows of famine for our deſtruction, and to encreaſe it upon us: to conſume us with famine and the ſword* (the Prophet joyneth them together twenty times at the leaſt in ſeverall places, as inſeparable companions.) Terrible was that which the Prophet by Gods command denounced of old, and which we may truely ſay is fallen upon us, *on whom the ends of the world are*

Lev. 26. 19.
26.
Eze. 5. 17.
Jer. 16. 4.
24. 10.
1. Cor. 10. 11.

are come. That *God* would *call for a sword, and every mans sword should be against his brother, and that he would rain* (upon his enemies) *an overflowing rain.* Its to be feared, that *our harvest* (as the Prophet hath it) *will be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow*: and that *they* (a strange Nation) *shall eat up our harvest, and our bread, which our sons* and *daughters should eat, and eat up our flocks and our herds, our vines and our fig-trees, and impoverish our fenced cities* (wherein we trust) *with the sword. That the field is wasted, the land mourneth, for the corn is wasted, the harvest of the field is perished.* It were to be wished, that this may not be our case. Isa. 17. 11. Jer. 5. 17. Joel 1. 10. 11.

But many there are that mingle their *complaints* with *admiration*, they *wonder* why there should be such *judgements* upon us, why they should live in such unhappy *times*; and among these *quæres*, they would seem to *answer* themselves, and give *reasons* for these calamities. Some ascribe them to *fortune*, some to the *ambition* of great ones, others to other *causes* and *men*, none to *themselves*. But certainly all our *miseries* come from this *spring*, the

neglect of *Gods worship*, nay the *contempt* of it, and the exorbitancies of men, which carry them headlong into all mischief, as *presumptiously* to sin against the glorious Majestie of God, *desperately* to offend his omnipotent power, and to deal most *unthankefully* with a most sovereigne *bounty*: offering unheard of indignitie to the *law* of his *justice*, the *awe* of his *Majestie*, the reverend *regard* of his *presence*, the *terror* of his *power*, and the *long-suffering* of his *love*. Sin, and nothing but sin, is the true cause of all punishments, and miseries; and the *judgments* which have befallen in all former ages. This is plainly to be seen in the most sacred *Scriptures*.

Ezra 9.13. *Ezra* in his time acknowledged so much. *All this* (saith he, meaning the punishments the people had suffered) *is come upon us for our evil deeds, thou O Lord hast punished us lesse then our iniquities have deserved.* So saith *Esay*.

Esay. 17. 9. 10. *There shall be desolation, because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindfull of the rock of thy strength.* So *Jeremiah*. *Behold I*

Jer. 29 17. 19. *will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, &c. Because they*

they have not hearkned unto my words. So *Ezekiel. When the land ſinneth againſt* Ezek. 14. 13
me by treſpaſſing grievouſly, then will I ſtretch my hand upon it, and will break the ſtaff of the bread thereof, and will ſend famine upon it, and will cut off man and beaſt from it. So *Hoſea. They have deep-* Hoſ 9 9.
ly corrupted themſelves, therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will viſit their ſinnes. And (exhorting the people to repentance and prayer) he ſaith, *O Iſrael return unto the Lord thy God, for thou haſt fallen by thine iniquity.* Hoſ. 14. 1

We muſt therefore of neceſſity conclude, that nothing hath brought theſe heavy *judgements* of God upon us, but the *crying* ſinnes of this Nation: for if ever, in any foregoing age Saint *Johns* words might juſtly be taken up. *Totus mundus in maligno poſitus eſt* (never ſo many malignants) *the whole world lyeth in wickedneſſe*; now is the time, and the *Scene* may moſt fitly be laid in this *Land*, where all ſinnes are *acted*; and to us the words of the *Prophet* may fitly be applyed. *By ſwearing, lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.* And concerning the ſeamleſſe coat of *Chriſt*, how is it rent in this 1 Joh. 5. 19

Nation. What dangerous *sects, errours and heresies* are publiquely broached and *professed*, to the great *dishonour* of God, the *disunion* of *affections*, and *breaking the bond of love and charity?* So that it's no merveile, if *the land mourn, and the earth yeeld not her encrease*: Nay, we must
Lam 3 22. needs confesse with the Prophet. *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

The *bowels* of his *compassions* (if our hearts be not hardned) we may take notice of, not onely in his long *patience* to us, and forbearance of us, and the free use of his *Word* and *Sacraments*, but by his extraordinary *admonitions* and warnings even from heaven it self. How many *portents* and *prodigies* of his future anger have we of late seen? as *Comets*, apparitions in the air, raining of corn, monstrous births of man-kinde, and other his *creatures*, which wise men in all ages have held as Messengers, and forerunners of *misery*, and Gods *judgements*, unlesse diverted by *repentance* and humiliation? Yet these predictions of his wrath, we have either *neglected*, or *misinterpreted*: not unlike the *Jews*, of whom *Josephus* relates; Who, when a starre or *Comet* (in the

shape of a sword) hung over the city of *Jerusalem* by the space of a yeer, before the destruction of it; and that when at the feast of *Vnleavened bread* there shone a light at nine of the clock in the night as bright, as if it had bin the clearest day in the yeer; yet (saith he) some of the *Jews* interpreted them according to their severall *fancies*, others wholly contemned and *sleighted* them, till (at last) too late, they found their own *folly*, to their utter destruction. De bell. Jud l. 7. c 12.

But more observant of things of this nature was *Lewis the gentle*, son to *Charlemain*; for when some of his *Courtiers* (perceiving he was troubled at the apparition of a *Comet*) shewed him that place in the prophet [*Be not dismayed at the signes of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them*] he answered: We ought not indeed to fear any thing but him, who is the *Creator* both of us and that *Comet*: yet we cannot but sufficiently admire, and acknowledge his goodnesse, that vouchsafeth to admonish us impenitent sinners, and to stirre us up to *repentance* by such *signes* as these. Jer. 10. 2. Aimon. de gest. Fran. l. 5. c. 37.

Now though we wave theſe things as not to be *regarded*, yet we ſhould not be ſo ſenceleſſe and ſtupid as to ſlight the *judgements* under which we lye: but be ſollicitous to remove the *cauſe* of them; that the *effects* may be removed alſo. Sin and tranſgreſſion we finde to be the *cauſe*, an humble *confeſſion*, with contrite hearts for that which we haue formerly committed, and *amendment of life* for the future, with earneſt *prayer* to *God to take off* his heavy hand, muſt be the *cure*. We muſt ſay with
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But we are farre ſtom taking the right courſe to remove theſe *judgments*, onely we look back to former times, and comparing ours with thoſe, we conclude them to be *happy*, and ours moſt *miſerable*; we complain and murmure, thats all we do. It cannot be denied, but that ours at this preſent may *paralel*, (if not *exceed*) the worſt of *times*, if we conſider the *dearth* and ſcarcity of all manner of *food*, and neceſſaries: the unſeaſonableneſſe of *weather*, deſtroy-

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ing the fruits of the earth, a plain prognostique of *famine* to ensue: the land almost destroyed with *distractions*, and divisions, yea, with *murders* and rapine; *trade* utterly decayed, and many thousands of people undone, many poor widows and orphans succourlesse, and harbourlesse, ready to perish; all these being the sad *effects* of a *civil* (but a *bloody*) warre: yet these are not the worst of our *miseries*, our condition is yet more *wretched*: For all that have been yet enumerated, are *without us*, nor do they detract from our eternall *happinesse*, but rather adde to it. *Afflictio dat intellectum*, these temporall judgements do, or should bring us to the consideration of the *cause*, (namely *Sin*) and consequently to a *detestation* of it: but the *distractions* which are *within us*, make us much more miserable, then these which are *without us*. Our *understanding* is blinde, our *will* perverse, and prompt to all evil, the *flesh* lusteth against the spirit, and our *affections* are so inordinate, that no kingdom, no not our own, is at such discord, as we are within our selves: which is the chief *cause* that God is so offended with us: this, and onely

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this makes us miserable indeed.

It were therefore to be wished, that as we *look back* to the condition of our *predecessors*, so we would *balance* our *lives* with theirs: & then we should be forced to confesse, that they were not so great *sinners* as we are, and therfore their punishments ought to be lesse then ours, by the rule of proportion of *Gods* justice: and (considering this) we would soon lay down these *complaints*, & betake our selves to some *expedient*, to appease the wrath of *God*. Besides, if we would but take notice of the course they took, when either they felt, or feared the heavy hand of God; we should confesse, that they deserved more *favour* from *God* then we do: and we lesse *pity* from him, then they. To leave other things, and to passe by their *sanctity* and piety of life, (which the greater it was, the harder it is for our imitation) They had, and applyed not onely *a cure* for their afflictions when they befell them, but an *Antidote* too. And this was *Prayer*: In all their *difficulties*, they had recourse to *prayer*, as a speciall *sanctuary* to flee too, hoping (nay being assured) to obtain any thing at *Gods* hands by it. Were they at any time in *danger* of *enemies*, they had recourse to God by *prayer*. And how prevalent it was, ever with God, appeareth by that notable place in *Exodus*; when

Joshua

Joshua fought against the *Amalekites*, Exod. 17.11. *Moses* lift up his hands to *God*, and *Israel* prevailed, and when he let down his hands, *Amalek* prevailed. So that it was not *Joshuahs* sword, but *Moses* prayer, that overcame the *Amalekites*.

The Children of *Ruben* and *Gad* fight against the *Hagarites*, & one hundred thousand of them were delivered into their hands; for *they cryed to God in the battell* (saith the text) *and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him.* The *Moabites* and *Ammonites* came in great multitudes to fight against *Jehosaphat*. He being in fear of them, made his addresse to *God*, by prayer, and said. *O our God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* And the Lord turned the forces of his enemies one upon another, and they destroyed themselves. 1.Ch.5 20. 21. 2.Ch.5 20. 22.

Hezekiah prayed against *Senacherib* king of *Assyria*, that invaded his kingdom with a mighty army, and the *Lord* sent an *Angel* by night into the camp, and destroyed 185000. of them. 2. Kin. 19.15. 35.

Zera the *Ethiopian* came against king *Asa* with an host of a thousand thousand, *Asa* having 580000. to oppose him; 2. Chr. 14.8.

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2. Chr. 14. 8. &c. *He cryed to the Lord* and ſaid, *It is noth[ing] with thee to help, whither with many, [or] with them that have no power. Help us [O] Lord our God, for we reſt on thee, &c.* and the *Ethiopians* were utterly routed and ſlain.

Pſal. 56. 9. King *David* found the force of *prayer* effectuall in this kinde, for he ſaith, *When I cry to thee, then ſhall mine enemies turn back.* There are diverſe other examples of this nature in holy writ.

In the caſe of *famine*, we may ſee Jam. 5. 17. 18. what Saint *James* writes of *Elias*, that *he prayed earneſtly, that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three yeers and ſix moneths. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

1. King. 17. & 18. *Samuel* having terrified the people for their ingratitude, by thunder and rain in harveſt, was entreated by the people 1 Sa. 12. 18 *to pray to God on their behalf to withdraw that judgement from them* which he did.

Yet a little neerer to our ſelves.

The people in the abſence of *Moſes*, cauſe *Aaron* to make a golden *Calf*; *God* is highly diſpleaſed with them, and Ex. 32. 10. 11. 14. ſaith to *Moſes*, *Let me alone, that I may conſume them. Moſes beſought the Lord for*

them, and he was appeased.

In the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the countrey round about, but by *prayer* preserved *Zoar*. *Jonah* (being sent by God) denounceth destruction to the great city *Ninive*. The king, and the people betake themselves to *prayer* and repentance, and *God repented of the evil that he had said, that he would do unto them, and he did it not.* Gen 19.19 Jon 3.4 10

In particular cases we finde. *Jacob* prayed for deliverance from the wrath of his brother *Esau*, and had it. *Hannah* from barrenness of womb, and the Lord heard her. By *prayer*, *Jeremiah* was comforted in the *dungeon*, and released. *Daniel* saved from the violence of the *lyons*. *Job* was preserved upon the *dunghil*. The *Thief* found *Paradise* upon the *Crosse*. And *Peter* was delivered from prison by the prayers of the *Church*. Gen. 32 9. 1.Sam.1.11 Jer. 40. Dan. 6.22. Luk.23 42. Act. 12.5.

If any wanted *necessaries*, they prayed to *God* for them. As *Jacob* for *bread*, and *raiment*. If for *wisdom* to manage their calling, as *Solomon*, he begged, and had it in large measure. If they lay *sick* and desired *health*, as *Hezekiah*: upon his *prayer* to *God*, he had not onely the sentence of *death* revoked, but fifteen Gen.28.20 1.Kin.3 9. 2.Kin.20.6

yeers

yeers added to his *life*.

In the new Teſtament we finde the duty in great eſtimation. Our *Saviour* (to encourage us, not that he had need himſelf) oft times uſed to *pray*, and gave us a rule, *Pray alwayes*. So did the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Pray without ceaſing*. And the *Fathers* and Doctours in the *Primitive church* gave *prayer* many *encomiums*, ſtiling it the *key of heaven*, and practiſed it oftner then any other religious duty. Nay in thoſe times, (as the beſt things may in time be corrupted) ſome there were (the *Pſalliani* or *Euchite*) that *prayed* ſo much, that they which ſhould hear of it (ſaith *Auguſtine*) would think it incredible; and were therefore numbred among the *Heretiques* of that age. Their errour grew, upon the miſunderſtanding of thoſe words of our *Saviour*, and of the *Apoſtle*, of *praying alwayes*, and *without ceaſing*, which (as the *Fathers* expound them) was, that men ſhould allot ſome time daily, for performing the duty of *prayer*.

Luc 21 36

1. Theſ. 5. 17.

But we wretched *creatures* (a thing much to be lamented) in theſe very times of heavy and bitter afflictions, when *heaven* it ſelf, the *elements*, and all *creatures* elſe ſeem to be ſenſible of them;

them; we (I ſay) do not ſo much as think of *amendment of life*, nor ſeek we to *God* by *prayer*, but in theſe extremities have recourſe to the *arm of fleſh*, and rely upon our own *ſtrength* and *wiſdoms*, then which (*God* being neglected) nothing is more vain, and helpleſſe. Nay, being (already) *ſtricken*, we *have not* Jer 5 3. *grieved, being* (almoſt) *conſumed, we have refuſed to receive correction. We have made our faces harder then a rock, we have refuſed to return.* And as it was in the prophet *Eſays* time; *In that* Iſa. 22. 12. *day* (a day like ours) *did the Lord God of hoſts call to weeping, and mourning, and to baldneſſe, and to girding with ſackcloth. And behold joy and gladneſſe, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep, eating fleſh, and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die.* 13. Inſomuch as *God* may again take up that complaint which he did long ſince; *In vain have* Jer. 2. 30. *I ſmitten your children, they received no correction.* And it's no marveile (we coming ſo ſhort in this duty of *prayer*, of thoſe which have gone before us) that all the *elements* conſpire againſt us; nor is it wonder, if we feel daily the revenging hand of *God* (which *prayer* only (as it were) tyes up) in greater meaſure, then they felt it. There-

Therefore are we much to be blamed for though we conceive, that *Gods* judgements lye heavier upon us then upon any *Nation* of former ages, yet we procraſtinate, and put off from us this wholſome remedy of *prayer*. Our neceſſities are *preſent*, why ſeek we not for *preſent* help? Do we know whither we ſhall have time to *pray* while too morrow? how dare we then promiſe ſo much to our ſelves? The *Parable* of the fooliſh *Virgins* ſhould teach us to take the *preſent* time: for none ever eſcaped unpuniſhed that neglected and let ſlip the *time* and opportunity of *Gods* mercy. The *Prophets* counſell was,

Iſa. 55 6. *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is neer.*

We are daily frighted with many fears, and thoſe not cauſeleſſe; one *plague*, one *judgement* ſucceeds another, nor are we free either within or without us from *divine* vengeance. In theſe extremities what more preſent remedy or help can we *finde*, then by calling upon *God*, and caſting our cares upon him? *Is any afflicted* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*)

Jam. 5 13. *Let him pray.* If croſſes, dangers, ſickneſſe, warre, famine, peſtilence, tempeſtuous weather, want, or other calamity

ity hang over our heads or befall us, hat is to be done? *Let us pray.* If the nce of our ſinnes trouble us (as well ey may) if the fear of eternall death, *the wages of ſin*) afflict us, *Let us pray:* r *prayer* is the life, and ſoul of the ſoul, and ſo profitable a duty, ſo neceſſa- y that the ſoul, health, life it ſelf, and all we have depend upon it.

Then why do we ſo much neglect it, ſo little regard it? why have we not recourſe to *God* by daily and fervent *prayers?* eſpecially in theſe times, when we have more need of his help and ſuc- cour then ever before. The *Church* is rent and torn, the *Kingdom* diſtracted, and even at the brink of ruine and de- ſtruction. Can we behold theſe *deſola- tions* with dry *eyes*, without bleeding *hearts?* ſhall we not deprecate *Gods* anger, and imprecate his favour, and become humble ſuppliants to him, to pardon our great and manifold ſins, and to avert theſe his heavy judgements from us? ſhall the heauens ſeem to *mourn* and ſhall not we, ſhall we not?

If a man have loſt all that he poſſeſ- ſed, and become blinde, lame, and in- firme, this man muſt either *beg* or *ſtarve* and periſh. Certainly we have loſt by

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our transgressions all the good we ha
and therewith all the gifts and grace
of grace and nature; what then remain
but that like beggers we cry at the ga
of Gods mercy? when all other reme
dies fail us, *prayer* is onely left us. I
then we neglect the lifting up of our
eyes, our hearts, our hands to *God*, no
marveile if he let loose the *reynes* of all
calamities, miseries, and afflictions to
rush in upon us.

For the *neglect* of this duty of *prayer*, the kingdom mourns; for *neglect* of *prayer* the true worship of *God* is lost; for *neglect* of *prayer* we are become a scorn to our neighbours: for *neglect* Isa. 29 14. of *prayer* the wisdom of *our wisemen doth perish, and the understanding of prudent men is hid*: for *neglect* of *prayer* all vertue and goodnes hath forsaken the land, and an inundation of wickednesse hath overflowen it, and brought these heavy *judgements* into it.

Object. But some may say, what need these motives & exhortations to *prayer*? have we not *prayed* these seven yeers past? have we not spent whole dayes together in this duty, & yet we finde no *ease* of our troubles, no *comfort* in our afflictions, but rather daily *additions* to them

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Answ. 'Tis true, that in these great distractions of *Church* and *common-wealth*, *God* hath been pleased (as it were) to *hide* himself from us, and to neglect our *prayers*. But this hath oft times befalen other *states* and *Churches* before us. How often did *David* complain of this in his time, as we may read in many of his Psalms? *How long Lord wilt thou hide thy self for ever, shall thy wrath burn like fire?* So Psalm 13. 1. 44. 24 88. 14. and diverse other places *God* by the *prophets* and other his *Saints* used this *metaphore* many times, in their own cases, as *Job*. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy*. So *God* by the *Prophet*, as *I hid me and was wroth*. And: *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee*. And in *Jeremiah*, *I have hid my face from this city*. And in the *Prophet Ezekiel*, *I hid my face from them*. And lastly, *Esay* on the behalf of the people, *Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us*. For it is the nature and condition of *affliction*, to perswade those that are under it to think, that *God* is *absent* from them.

Psal. 89. 46

Job 13. 24.
Isa. 57. 17.
54. 8.
Jer. 33 5.
Eze. 39 23.
Isa. 64. 7.

But the reasons why *God* seems to be so, and not to answer our *prayers* are these, among others.

It

1. It is for *sinne* committed, and *impenitency* following that *God* seems to *leave us*.

2. Because the *prayers* we make, in the time when *Gods* judgements are upon us, are not framed *aright*.

3. Lastly, *God* seems to be *absent*, and not to *hear* and answer our *prayers* according to our expectation, for our own good, and for causes best known to himself.

1. The whole currant of *Scriptures* may informe us, that *God* never *absents* himself, or *hides* his face from any *person*, or nation, but for *sinne*, and *impenitence*. *Moses* in his song (setting forth the rebellions, idolatry, and other sinnes
Deu 32 19. of the *Jews*) saith: *When the Lord*
20. *saw this, he abhorred them, &c. And said, I will hide my face from them, &c.*
2. Chr. 24. So the *prophet Zechariah* to king *Joash*,
20. and *the people*, *Why transgresse ye the commandments of the Lord that ye cannot prosper: because ye have forsaken the Lord he hath also forsaken you.* *God* (by the wise man) tells the wicked;
Pro. 1. 24. *Because I have called and ye have refu-*
25. *sed, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: But ye have set at nought all my counsells, and would none of my*

reproof

proof, &c. When your fear cometh as Pro. 1. 27.
desolation, and your destruction cometh
as a whirlwinde: when distresse and an-
guish cometh upon you. Then shall they 28.
call upon me, but I will not answer: they
shall seek me early, but they shall not finde
me. And *God* (by *Esay*) complaining Isa. 1. 15.
of the the rebellion of *Judah*, saith,
When you stread forth your hands, I will
hide mine eyes from you: yea, when you
make many prayers, I will not hear, your
hands are blood. So it is in *Jeremi-*
ah, When they fast, I will not hear their Jer. 14. 12.
cry, but I will consume them by the sword,
and by the famine, and by the pestilence.
God hides not his face from his friends. It
is *sin*, and *impenitence that* is the cause of
his *absence. Thou hast hid thy face from* Esa 64 7.
us, and hast consumed us, because of our in- 59 2.
iquities, saith *Esay*. And *your iniquities*
have separated between you and your God, Eze. 39. 23.
and your sins have hid his face from you.
And *God* (by the prophet *Ezek.*) saith, Pro. 28. 9.
They trespassed against me, therefore I hid
my face from them.

He that turneth away his ear from hear-
ing the law, even his prayer shall be abo- Jer. 7. 16.
mination. We may read, that *God* forbad
Jeremiah to pray for the impenitent
Jews, Pray not thou for this people (saith
he)

Jer. 7. 16. he) *neither lift up cryes or prayer for them neither make intercessiion to me, for I will not hear thee.* The man that was cured of his blindnesse, could tell the Jews Joh. 9. 31. *We know that God heareth not sinners*, meaning the unrepentant.

But if any man be so plunged in the security of sinne, that he feel in himself no provocations to true *repentance*, his best way to cure this evil is, to consider and weigh with himself, that he (*miserable creature*) hath to do with an *eternall and immortall God*, that sees, and hears all things, before whom, the Job. 4. 18. 15. 15. *Angels nor the heavens are clean*: and that there's no way to avoid his judgement, unlesse he seriously *repent*: and enquire carefully into his forepassed life: and if he finde himself polluted with many sinnes, he may conclude, that there are infinite more in him which he cannot see, but *Gods* all-searching eye doth discover, and detest. And therefore, may reason thus with himself. If the whole world should applaud my actions, and veile my *sinnes* with the name of *vertue*, yet can I not escape the just censure, and judgement of *God*. I must sooner or latter, appear before that all-seeing, and hearing *judge*,

and

nd render an accompt of all my evil *words* and *works*; Why then bluſh I not? why abſtain I not from ſinne? why do I not endeavour with all care, nd diligence, to amend my life? Certainly, if thus we would do, unfeignedly, without hypocriſie, and *call* upon the *holy Spirit* to put us upon and aſſiſt us, in that good work; we ſhould not fear, but that our prayers would be *heard*, ſo that we ſhould never have cauſe to *repent* us of this *repentance*.

Another cauſe that *God* anſwers not our *prayers*, is; We pray not aright. Saint *James* is plain for this, *Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſſe*. And we may erre, and *aſk amiſſe*, both in the *matter*, and the *manner*. II.

For the *matter*, we may ask things not onely *unprofitable*, and hurtfull to us, but ſuch as neither ſtand with the glory of *God*, nor the good of our own *ſouls*. And in theſe caſes, no marvaile if *God* anſwer not our *petitions*. We ought therefore to beg ſuch things, as are fit for *God* to give, and for *us* to receive: and theſe are, firſt, *Spirituall*, and heavenly. And ſecondly, *Corporall*, and temporall. I.

1. The beſt of *Spirituall* good

things, is the *Summum bonum*, the chief good: *Eternall blessednesse*, which indeed is the *Epitomee* of all good things; and consists in the fruition of the *beatificall vision* of *God*, in his glory and kingdom, *Where there are pleasures for evermore.* There are other *spiritualls* too, that we may lawfully *pray* for; as the *knowledge of God*, of which our *Saviour* said, *This is life eternall, that they may know thee, the onely true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* As also *Faith, Hope, Charity*, and all other graces of the Holy *Spirit*. These good things we may, nay we ought to *pray* earnestly for.

Psal. 16. 11

Jo. 17. 3.

2. *Corporall* and temporall blessings are health of body, deliverance from dangers; for food, and sustenance, peaceable times, and many other of this nature. and these may be lawfully *prayed* for, yet not without condition. For, whereas many times they do more harm (being obtained) then good, they must therefore be *prayed* for with this limitation, as *farre* as they shall conduce to *Gods glory*, and our own *salvation*. But surely, we many times *ask* those things, which stand in oppo-

sition

tion to both these, whereby it falls out, that *God* will not hear us according to our *will*, though he hear us for our *good*. We are like little children many times, that will even with tears beg of their fathers, things which may do them harm, as knives, and the like; yet their fathers in discretion will not grant them. So *God* (who loves us with greater affection then any father loves his children, nay more then we love our selves) in his divine *wisdom* consults, what is best for our good, and denies us those things, which we foolishly ask, to our own detriment, and in his fatherly *affection*, and mercy, grants those things, which he knows *needfull*, and profitable for us.

See what Saint *Bernard* excellently said upon this subject. I beleeve (saith he) that the *Petitions* of the heart, consists in three things, nor do I see, what a child of *God* ought to *pray* for besides. Two of them are *temporall*; the good things of *body* and *soul*: the third, is the *blessednesse* of *life eternall*. Marveile not neither, that I said, *corporall* good things are to be *prayed* for of *God*, because all *corporall* are his, aswell as *spirituall*.

Detriplici modo orois serm. 5. in quadrages.

Therefore they are to be expected from him by *prayer*, whereby we may be ſtrengthned in his ſervice. Yet we are to *pray* oftner, and more fervently for the wants of the *ſoul*: that is, to obtain *Gods* grace, and the vertues of the ſoul: no leſſe are we to do for *eternall life*, where both ſoul and body will be in perfect bliſſe. Therefore in theſe three, as they are *petitions* of the heart, we are to beware of theſe things. *Superfluity* in the firſt: *Impurity* in the ſecond, and *Pride* in the third. For many times *Temporall* things are deſired for *pleaſure*: *vertues* and graces for *oſtentation*: and ſome (perhaps) ſeek not *Eternall life* in *humility*, but in confidence of their *merits*. Nor do I ſpeak this, but that when a man hath received *grace*, it gives him confidence to *pray*: but yet it becomes him not to place *confidence* in or by that *grace*, to obtain that he *prayes* for. Theſe graces are ſo given, onely to conferre this upon him, to hope for greater things from that hand, that beſtowed the other. Let therefore our *prayer* for *Temporalls*, be reſtrained to *neceſſaries*: Let that *prayer* which is made for the good of the *ſoul*, be free from all *impurity*, and intent

ent onely to the good pleaſure of God: nd let that *prayer* which is made for *Eternall life*, be in all *humility*, preſuming (as is ſaid) onely upon *Gods* mercy.

2. We may erre alſo, in the *manner* of *Praying*, many wayes, which cauſe our *prayers* to become fruitleſſe.

1. We *pray* many times *coldly*, and perfunctorily, without attending to what we *pray* for. Surely conſidering that all our ſafety, happineſſe, and good depends only upon *God*, and that we are to ſeek for it no where elſe; and that were it not for *Gods* mercy and goodneſſe, we ſhould periſh for ever. We ſhould therefore as (as often as we make our addreſſe to him by *prayer*) caſt our ſelves (as it were) out of our ſelves, and lay aſide all tertene cares, and encumbrances, which otherwiſe may hinder, and trouble us, in performance of that duty. But, if when we ſet our ſelves to *Prayer*, or other *Spirituall* exerciſes, we become *Carnall*, and ſuffer evil and fooliſh thoughts to poſſeſſe our mindes, ſuffering our ſelves to be carried away, and our thoughts to wander up and down; theſe *prayers* are in the ſight of

God, but *hypocriſie*, and *abomintion*, nor can they receive any gracious *anſwer* from him, for how can we conceive, that *God* will *hear* us, when we *hear* not our ſelves? Would we have God *mindefull* of us, when we are not *mindefull* of our ſelves, nor minde that we *Pray* for? And if we *Pray* thus careleſſely, is it not expedient, that *God* ſhould ſhake of this *frigidity* and extravancie from us, by withholding his aſſiſtance? *Qui timide rogat, docet ſe negari.* A cold and perfunctory *Prayer*, deſerves a negative *anſwer*.

2. What if we *Pray* without *Faith*, and *confidence* to be *heard*, doubting of the divine promiſes ſo frequently made in Scripture? as *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* And *Thou ſhalt call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer, thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, here I am.* And *What things ſoever you deſire, when ye pray, beleeve that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.* When our *Saviour* was importuned by the father of the deaf and dumb childe, whom the diſciples could not cure; *Chriſt* told him (hearing him ſay, *If thou canſt do any thing*) *If thou canſt beleeve all things are poſſible to him that beleeveth.*

Pſal. 50. 15.
Iſa. 58. 9.
Mar. 11. 24.
9. 22. 23.

leeveth. That is, there's nothing, but *Christ* can, and will do for them that *beleeve*. If (I say) we *doubt* of these and the like promises, we deprive him of his *glory*, and do (what in us lies) to *detract* from his *mercy* and *truth*, and make *God* our enemy, instead of *hearing* and granting our petitions. Certainly, if we *beleeve* men, so often falsifying their words, why beleeve we not, but distrust *God*, *that cannot lie? whose promises in Christ are Yea and Amen*; especially considering, that his incomprehensible *Power* and *mercy* are joyned with his *truth*. It's the custom among men, to *confide* in those, that are *willing*, and *able* to help us; with what face then can we distrust *God*, so *true* in his *promises*, so *indulgent* in his *favours*, of whose *mercy* and loving kindenesse we have had so oft experience, and of whose *omnipotence* it were blasphemy to doubt? Again, we are to know, that *Prayers* are a testimony of our *faith*: If then wee in our *Prayers* doubt of the *truth* of *Gods* promises, and question whither he hear them or not, what mark or print of *Faith* appears in us?

Heb. 6. 18.
2. Cor. 1. 10

who can perſwade himſelf that ſuch *prayers* are heard?

3. Again, we erre in the *manner* of our *prayers*, if we do not ſo temper and conform our owne *will*, that it may become wholly *ſubject* to the *will* of *God*: obſerving what is agreeable to his *will*, in what we ought to *pray* for, and in what not, in what he hath promiſed to *hear* us, & in what he hath not promiſed: not murmuring at any *croſſe* is laid upon us by him, but bearing it with thankſgiving, and bleſſing his holy *Name* for it. And *God* will have us (and of right he may exact it from us) ſo obſequious and obſervant to him, as that we make enquiry in his *Word*, with all modeſty, and reverence, concerning thoſe things which he hath promiſed, and to wait with *patience*, and aſſured *hope* for his performance, in his own time; leaving to him aſwell what, as when ſeems him good, not preſcribing to his wiſdom and omnipotency either *time* or, *manner*. For it were an intollerable arrogancy, if wretched and mortall men, ſhould aſſume ſuch power over their *Creator*, as to ſubject him to their appetite, and not to ſubmit wholly to his *good will* and *pleaſure*;

who

who knoweth what is better for them, then they themſelves. This Saint *John* knew well, when he ſaid, *This is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* And *God* himſelf (by the *Prophet*) intimates as much. *In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee*; that is, at that *time*, which I have determined in my *wiſdom*, and providence. Therefore in *praying* for terrene, and temporary things, (ſuch as we beg under the title of *daily bread*,) we are to ſubject our ſelves to *Gods* fatherly *will*; and to deſire them if it ſtand with his good *pleaſure*: if not, we muſt yeeld to him in a filial *obedience*, and patiently endure what he ſhall lay upon us, as long as he pleaſeth. King *David* (in his exile,) did ſo: as appears by his ſpeech to *Zadok* the Prieſt; *Carry back the Ark of the Lord* (ſaith he) *into the city. If I ſhall finde favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it, and his habitation: But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in him, behold, here am I, let him do to me, as it ſeemeth good to him.* So the *Leper* in his petition for his *cure*, *Lord if thou wilt, thou canſt make me*

1. Jo. 5. 14.

Iſa. 49. 8.

2. Sam. 15. 25. 26.

Mat. 8. 2.

clean. The like requeſt did our *Savi-*
Mat. 22. 42. *our* make before his death. *Father if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheleſſe, not my will, but thine be done.*

4. Another errour in our *Prayers*, and which may obſtruct the paſſage of them, is an *overweening* of our own *worth*, if we aſcribe any thing to our own *merits*, and expect to be *heard* the rather for them. Therefore it were bet-
Ber. ſerm. 4. inadvent. ter for us, to follow *Bernards* rule, rather to *hide*, then to *brag* of our good works, if we have any: as poor people when they begge an alms, put not on fine clothes, but ragges, and diſcover their ſores, and nakedneſſe, to make men inclineable to pity. And indeed, what have we to boaſt of? Whatſoever good we do, is meerly of the grace of *God*, not of the *merit* of the doer, but *of the good pleaſure of his will, to the glory of his*
2. Cor. 1. 31 *grace.* So *that he that glorieth, is is not to glory in himſelf, but in the Lord* who giveth, to whom he pleaſeth. *Meritum meum miſeratio domini*, ſaith *Auſt.* My merit, is the mercy and goodneſſe of the *Lord.* The ſame *Auſt.* up-
In Pſa. 138. on the words [*forſake not the work of*

thy

thy hands] ſaith, I commend not the *work* of my hands, for I fear, if thou look upon that, thou ſhalt finde more *ſinnes*, then *merits*. This I onely *pray*, ſpeak, and deſire: *Forſake not the work of thy hands.* Look upon thy *work* in me, not my *work*: for if thou look upon mine, thou wilt *condemn* it, if upon thine own, thou wilt *crown* it. If then we acknowledge not our own miſery, and our manifold frailties and imperfections, with all ſubmiſſion, and reverence, and that we are nothing, or leſſe then nothing: or if we be any thing, that we are but duſt, and corruption, and a maſſe, infected with the poyſon of ſinne; and (for that) liable and ſubject every moment to death here, and eternall condemnation hereafter. If (I ſay) we acknowledge not this, but *Phariſaically* preſume upon our own righteouſnes, and good *works*, and think that *God* is bound to hear us for them; *we may ſeek him early, but we ſhall not finde him.* But, if (with the *Publican*) we ſhall confeſſe our unworthines, and ſay with *Jacob*, *Lord I am not worthy*, (or I am leſſe then) *the leaſt of all thy mercies, &c.* and with *Eſay*, I *am a man of unclean lips.* Pro. 1. 28 Gen. 32. 10 Iſa. 57. 15

Isa. 57. 15. *To this man will God look, even to him, that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit*: for the more we humble our ſelves, the fitter we are to ſeek and finde *God*, and to receive a gracious *anſwer* from him.

5. As the *conceit* (for it's but a meer *conceit*) of the *merits* of our good *works*; ſo the *opinion* of the *merit* of our own *prayers*, makes an obſtruction, that *God* hears them not. It's true, that they are our defenſive armes againſt *Satans* deſignes, and the means by which *God* hath appointed us to have recourſe to him, in any difficulty or danger: yet they muſt not be offered to *God* as though they were able of themſelves (without a further ſupply) to *merit* acceſſe, and acceptation with him. For this were to make a man lay his foundation upon himſelf (which indeed he is apt enough to do) but our *prayers* deſerve not any honour of themſelves, but as God honoureth them, by commanding us to uſe them, as the means to obtain his promiſes by them. If therefore we ſhall offer up our *prayers* for theirs, and not our *Saviours merits*, and in his Name, or that we ſhall decline *Chriſt*, and betake us to *Saints or Angels*, they cannot but procure

ure an ill *ſavour in the noſtrils of God.* We muſt direct them then to *God*, by his ſon *Jeſus Chriſt* onely, *by whom we have acceſſe to the throne of grace with boldneſſe.* He is our *High Prieſt, and cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without ſinne.* And *in that he himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* And therefore having *Chriſt* to be our *Advocate*, and that he tells us, *that he prayeth for his*, why ſhould we decline ſo eaſie a way, and take a harder and more deceitfull tract, either by the *merits* of our own *prayers*, or the *mediation* of *Saints* or *Angels.*

Heb. 4. 16. 15. Heb 2. 18. 1. Jo. 2. 1. Jo. 17. 5.

If there be occaſion to pray for the members of *Chriſt*, labouring under difficulties on earth, let the *prayers* aſcend to the *Head* (ſaith *Aug.*) who is gone before into heaven, by whom there *is propitiation for our ſinnes.* For if *Paul* be a *Mediator*, the other *Apoſtles* ſhould be ſo too: and if there be many *Mediators*, there's no reaſon why Saint *Paul* ſhould ſay, *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus.* In whom

1. Jo. 2. 2. 1. Tim. 2. 5.

whom we are one, if we keep the
Ephe. 4 3. unity of *the ſpirit*, *in the bond of peace*.
Therefore if we deſire that our *prayers*
Pſal 141.2. ſhould be as *incenſe*, or a *morning ſa-*
crifice to *God*, and receive a gracious
anſwer from him; we muſt tender them
to him onely, in the *Name*, and for
Mat. 3.17. the *merits of Jeſus Chriſt*, *In whom alone*
he is well pleaſed.

6. Laſtly, our *prayers* receive not
that *audience*, or acceptance that we ex-
pect, becauſe we offer them not with
that due *reſpect* we ought: our *outward*
behaviour is not ſuitable with that of
Petitioners. If a man *petition* for any
thing, it's fit he ſhould compoſe him-
ſelf, as becomes a *Petitioner:* that is,
by *uncovering* his head, *bending* him-
ſelf, and the like. We uſually call him
that begs an *alms* with his hat on, a
ſturdy begger, and give him relief ac-
Jer. 6.16. cordingly. *Aſk and enquire of the old*
pathes, and ſee, whither in former ages,
there were ever ſuch bold unreverend
Petitioners as now: God may well take
up to us the ſpeech which he uſed in
the Prophet, to the uncivill *Jews*; *If*
I be a Father, where is mine honour, if I
be a Maſter, where is my fear? Search
the *Scriptures*, and you ſhall finde,
how

ow reverently the Saints of *God* made their addreſſes to him. *Abraham* in his conference with *God*, *fell on his face.* So did *Mary*, the ſiſter of *Lazarus*, to our Saviour *Chriſt*. And the *Samaritan* Leper (one of the ten Lepers which were cured) *Fell down on his face at Chriſts feet*, giving him thanks, for the great benefit he had received from him: a geſture certainly of much ſubmiſſion. Gen. 17. 3. Jo. 11. 32. Lu. 17. 16.

King *Solomon*, aſſoon as he had built the *Temple*, powred out his *Prayers* to *God* for a bleſſing; Nor is that ſet down, that he prayed, onely, but (for our inſtruction) with what geſture he did it. *He roſe from the Altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees, with his hands ſpread up to heaven.* *Ezra* in his *Prayer* for the people, that had ſinned grievouſly, *Fell upon his knees, and ſpread out his hands to the Lord his God.* Saint *Pauls* precept is, *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting.* 1. Kin. 8. 15. 54. Ezr. 9. 5. 1. Tim. 2. 8.

Our

Lu. 22. 41. Act. 9. 40 20. 36. Our *Saviour* himself *kneeled* when he *prayed*. Saint *Peter* (*praying* for *Tabitha*) restoring from death to life, *kneeled down and prayed*. The like did Saint *Paul*, upon the *shore* at *Epheſus* with *all that were with him*.

We may read alſo in ſacred *Scripture*, that many *Penitents* joyned with their *prayers* ſmiting their breſts, and caſting aſhes upon their heads, renting their garments, and putting on of ſack-cloath; theſe, and the other before mentioned, being tokens that their *prayers* were fervent, and their confeſſion of ſinnes, and their repentance for them, ſerious and humble. For while we *caſt up our eyes*, and ſtretch our *hands* to heaven, we declare and ſignifie our ardent expectation of all aid and good from God alone, and from none other: When I *kneel*, I expreſſe my *humility*, when I *ſmite* my breſt I ſhew mine *indignation* againſt my ſelf for offending ſo gracious a *God*, and the like.

I deny not, but that the true worſhip of *God* conſiſts chiefly in *inward* not *outward* behaviour: yet outward geſtures are not only (as I ſaid) ſignes of the ſincerity of our *prayers*, but prevalent alſo,

alſo, to ſtirre up our *attentions*, and to caſt off all dulneſſe, and frigidity in *praying*. Beſides, theſe humble *geſtures* are (as it were) a means to incite others (that are ſpectators of our devotion) to the like reverentiall performance. And indeed, ſince *God* is the *Creator*, not onely of the *ſoul*, but of the body alſo, which is (as it were) the temple of the *Soul*; and that the *Body* one day muſt receive good, or ill with the *Soul*, why ſhould not *God* be honoured by both? I confeſſe (as I ſaid before) that the inward affections of the *Soul*, juſtly chalength the firſt place in our *Prayers*: nor is it to be thought, that *God* deſpiſeth the prayers of him that ſitteth, ſtandeth, or lyeth, if his affections go along with them, yet ſince *God* hath given man a *Body* with a *Soul*, for his own glory, Therefore (as the *Apoſtle* directs) *glorifie God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are Gods.* 1. Cor. 6. 20

In all theſe fore-named *geſtures*, it's certain, that the *heart* muſt be *lift up* before the *hands*, the *heart* muſt *kneel* before the *body*, (for the *heart* hath *knees* as well as the *body*, witneſſe Saint *Paul*) Eph. 3. 14 the *heart* muſt *weep* before the *eyes*:

and

and the *heart* must *speak*, before the *tongue*: for it's not the *voice*, or bare sound of words which *God* gives ear to, but the affection of the *heart*. (Though true *vocal prayer* is necessary to stirre up our fainting spirits, and to incite others to the like duty) for *God* Isa. 29. 13. (by the Prophet) complained of such as were onely wording *petitioners*, and our *Saviour* quotes the same text, a- Mat. 15. 8 gainst the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, *This people draw neer me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.*

Therefore (as *Augustine* doth) we may conclude, that *Oratio non est in multiloquio.* True *prayer* consists not in many words. And (with him) *Differunt multum loqui, & multum precari. Hoc negotium plus gemitibus, quam sermonibus agitur, plus fletu quam affatu.* There's great difference between much *speaking*, and much *praying*: this work is better effected by *groanes*, then *words*, by *weeping*, then by *speaking*.

There are divers presidents in *Gods* word, to inform us, that *God* hears Ex. 14. 15. *mental prayers*, aswell as *vocal*. *Wherefore cryest thou unto me* (saith God to

to *Moſes*) when we read not of a word that he ſpake. So, when *God* was offended at the *Iſraelites* for making a *golden calf*, *Moſes* ſtood ſad, and ſilent, yet as it ſeems he prayed ſecretly, and his prayer aſcended up to God; for God ſaid, *Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may conſume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.* Exo. 32. 10. *Hannah* likewiſe, *prayed* to the *Lord* in *heart, onely her lippes moved, but her voice was not heard*; that is, by 1. Sam. 1. 13 thoſe that were neere, but by *God* it was. And the woman in the *Goſpel*, ſpake not to our *Saviour* to cure her, but onely *ſaid within her ſelf, If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole:* Mat. 9. 21. yet ſhe was heard, and cured. Therefore it was, that Saint *Paul* ſaid, *I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with underſtanding.* 1. Cor. 14. 15. *Prayer* if it be true and fervent, and proceed from faith, if it be uttered by inward groanes, and ſighes from the heart, prevaile aſmuch with *God*, as that which comes with the greateſt expreſſions by and from the lips: For God needs no information from us concerning our wants and neceſſities.

He

Mat. 6. 8. He knoweth what things *we have need of before we ask*: and our infirmities and preſſures are better known to him then to our ſelves. The Prophet knew Pſal. 38. 9. this when he ſaid, *Lord all my deſire is before thee, and my groanings are not hid from thee.*

Object. If God know what we pray for, may ſome ſay, and know what we need, and what dangers hang over our heads, before we petition to him; to what purpoſe is it, or wherefore do we *pray*? do we not *pray* in vain? and may not our prayers be ſpared? No, we muſt pray to him though. Saint *Je-* In Mat. 6. *rome* ſatisfies all men in this point. *We are not Informers, but Petitioners* (ſaith he) *and it's one thing to tell and inſtruct a man that is ignorant, and another, to make a requeſt to him that knoweth what we want.* It is not therefore in reſpect of God, that needs no *information*, but in regard of our ſelves that want his *protection*, that we pray unto him.

III. In the laſt place, the reaſons why God ſeems to abſent himſelf from us, and not to grant our requeſts, are many.

1. It may be the fit time, beſt known

mown to God to anſwer our deſires is ot yet come; for as there is a time when God may more eſpecially be *found*; ſo there is a time, which God hath reſerved to himſelf, *and ſeems to hide his face from us.* If he come not at our time to us, what are we to do? The Prophet *David* tells us, *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart, wait I ſay on the Lord.* Obſerve how ſlowly a tree yeelds it's fruit: Firſt it's planted, then it takes root, afterward it ſhoots forth, and bears leaves, and dilates it ſelf into arms and boughs: then it flowes, and buds, the fruit knots and ripens, they are gathered, and ſerved at the table, laſtly eaten and digeſted. The like time doth God take oft-times, and deals with his petitioners by degrees, yet ſaith at laſt, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee. Wait on the Lord* (ſaith Solomon) *and he will ſave thee.* And the Prophet, *The Lord is good unto them that wait for him. Though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry. Bleſſed are all they that wait for him.*

Pſal. 32. 6. 27. 14. Iſa. 49. 8. Pro. 20 22. Lam. 3. 25. Hab. 2. 3. Heb 10. 37 Iſ. 30. 18.

God prolongs the time, and deferres

to

to grant our requeſts for diverſe cauſes.

1. To kindle our *zeal* and conſtancy in *prayer*, and to exerciſe our faith and patience: and when things ſeem to be in the moſt deplorable condition, then to deliver us out of all our trouble.

Ex.2.23. The *Iſraelites* being under the preſſure of a hard ſervitude, pray for deliverance, God protracts it for many yeers, to try and exerciſe their faith and patience, in the mean time their ſlavery encreaſeth: they ſigh and are grieved, perhaps they conceived their complaints to be ſpent
13.17. in vain, but the event in their deliverance, at laſt anſwered them fully.

So *Chriſt* delayed the woman of
Mat.15.22. *Canaan*, firſt, by making as though he had not heard her, then by gi-
26;28. ving her a hard repulſe, even as if ſhe had been a *dog*, yet upon her faith and conſtancy, which appeared ſo great, he granted her deſire.

2. To declare and manifeſt his *omnipotency*, and to gain the greater glory to himſelf.

When God had freed the *Iſraelites* out of the *Egyptian* bondage, hee brought

rought them again into great fears, for *Pharaoh* purſued them with a readfull army, and the ſea was before them, ſo that they were encompaſſed, and no hope appeared to them to avoid deſtruction: inſomuch as they began to murmure, and ſay to *Moſes*, *Becauſe there were no graves in Egypt, haſt thou taken us away to die in the wilderneſſe?* They thought themſelves all loſt men. Then (contrary to all outward appearance of help) the ſea by Gods command, divided it ſelf, and the *waters were a wall unto them on the right hand, and on the left*: and they paſſed through the midſt of the *ſea upon the drie ground*; and this deliverance returned to the honour of God. Ex. 14. 11. 22. 17.

Many the like deliverances wee may finde in *Scriptures*, as of *Aſa. Jehoſaphat. Hezekiah*, and others, whom when God had ſuffered to be brought even to the pits brink of deſtruction, he by his omnipotent power, upon their humble petitions (*when the help of man was but vaine*) delivered them by the overthrow of their enemies.

3. To

3. To make us the more truly humble and *penitent*. For seeing we are not drawn to him by threats, nor allured by benefits, nor invited by promises, he will keep us under miseries and pressures; and untill we draw neer to him by an unfeigned repentance, he will give us no gracious answer. *His anger will not be turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.* Isa 5.25. He deals with us as *Absalom* did with *Joab*: *I sent to thee to come to me,* and because thou camest not, I set *thy field of corn on fire*, I see that hath brought thee to me. I drew thee (O *England*) saith God with cords of silk, prayed and invited thee to come to me, but thou hast broken those bonds, and wouldst not come: I have therefore stronger bands, the sword, and famine, which thou shalt lye under a while, to bring thee to me. When we once loosen the bands of wickedness, and repent us of the evil wee have committed; *Then shall wee call, and the Lord shall answer.* 2.Sa.14.32 Isa. 58.6. 9.

4. Many times God deferres the granting of our petitions in distresse and want, to make the deliverance and his gift the more *welcome* to us by how

how much the longer they have been deferred: which (if they had been ſooner granted,) would have either bin leſſe eſteemed, or that perhaps accounted as a due, which comes from God as a meer gift. *Diu deſiderata dulcius obtinentur, citius data vileſcunt.* Things long defired, are moſt acceptable being obtained, whereas things ſoon granted, grow contemptible and little worth. *Grata ſuperveniet quæ non ſperabitur hora.* A thing ſo long looked for, as that we were out of hope of obtaining it, is moſt welcome, though it come late. We ſee that *Abraham* prayed long to God for a ſon, and ſo long, that he even diſpaired of obtaining one, deſiring onely of God, *O that Iſhmael* (his ſon by *Hagar* the bond-woman) *might live before him.* No doubt but when God had performed his promiſe to him in *Iſaac*, it was farre more acceptable to him, then if he had received him ſooner. *Hannah* (having her *womb ſhut up by the Lord*) went up *yeer by yeer to the houſe of the Lord, and prayed for a childe*; God granted her requeſts at laſt, which ſhe received ſo joyfully, and eſteemed ſo highly of that bleſ-

Ge. 17. 18.

1. Sam. 1. 5. 7.

1.Sa.1.28. 2.1. sing, that she dedicated that son *Samuel* to the Lord, and framed a song of thanksgiving for it. *Vult crebrius rogari Dominus, ut tanto gratius sit concedentis Donum.* God will be often prayed to, before he hears, that his gift may be received the more thankfully.

5. God denyes us that we pray for many times, because he intends to give us better things then those we ask. *Bernard* saith, It comes to passe oft times, that God hears not when we would have him, according to our will; yet soon after, hears us in those things which are for our good and salvation. That is, though he gives us not the things we ask, yet things farre better for us. We have an example in the Prophet *Elias*, who (to rid 1.Kin.19.4 himself of *Jezabells* tyranny) prayed God to take him out of this life by death: God heard him not presently, in that he prayed for, but soon after he translated him alive into his celesti- 2.Kin.2.11 all glory. Saint *Paul* besought the 2.Cor.12.8 Lord *thrice that the thorn in his flesh might depart from him.* Gods answer 9. to him was, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* A better thing God could

not

not give him. One prayes for plenty of *food* and ſuſtenance, God gives him a little competency and *health* with it: Another craves *wealth*, God denies that, but gives him wiſdom and *learning*. What cauſe hath any man then to quarrell with God? but rather to give him humble and hearty thanks, for ſuch his affection and love to him. Inaſmuch as he hath ſo much care of him, that he hears him not in thoſe unprofitable things he asketh out of ignorance, but changeth them into better gifts. *Multos non audit*, (ſaith Aug) *ad voluntatem, ut exaudiat ad ſalutem*, God hears not many according to their deſires, but hears them in that which doth them good. And therefore concludes, *Non habeatis pro magno, &c.* Account it not a great matter if thou bee'ſt not heard according to thine own will: but eſteem it as a great favour from God, if he hear thee for thy benefit. The ſame father gives the reaſon fully, why God grants not ſome things we pray for; *Quando non dat, ideo non dat, ne obſint quæ dat.* when he gives us not the things we ask, it's becauſe if he ſhould grant

them they would be prejndiciall to us. And in this caſe, *Exorari in perniciem rogantis, bonitas eſt*; It's his goodneſſe not to hear us, when we petition for thoſe things that would be our deſtruction. And *fruſtrari in noxijs, exaudire eſt*. To fail of our expectation for hurtfull things, is better for us, then if we were heard.

6. Again, as ſome men pray, and are not heard, becauſe is is for their good and ſalvation. So others pray and are heard, even to their hurt and damnation. *Auſt.* ſaith, *Apoſtolus rogat, &c.* The Apoſtle prayed and
In Pſ. 144. received not: The *Devil* prayed and had his requeſt granted. The Apoſtle received not, but it was for his perfection; the devil received to his damnation. God heard him whom he intended to damne, and heard not him whom he meant to ſave. *Job* prayed in his afflictions, God put him off to prove him: he ſate long in the duſt, and God anſwered him not: but he heard the *devil* and gave him leave to tempt him: yet the one was but to be proved, the other to be tormented. Therefore (ſaith he) Let no man be diſ-
Pſ. 145.151 couraged or dejected, or faint, when he

he makes any just request to God, and thinks he is not heard, but let his eyes wait upon God, *who giveth meat in due season*: When he gives not, it's because it should not hurt him. And he that prayeth for any unjust thing, and is heard, he is heard to his own punishment and detriment. It's fabled of the Bull and the Camel, that they petitioned *Jupiter* for hornes. The *Camel* obtained not his request but instead of *hornes*, *Jupiter* caused his *ears* to be cut off. The *Bull* had *hornes* given him, but he repented soon after that he had made that petition: for whereas (being without hornes) he was at liberty, and could not easily be taken, by having them he was soon caught, and put to the cart, and the plough, and at last brought to the shambles. I leave the application. Psa. 145. 19.

7. Sometimes we pray for that which God hears, yet will not grant, because he hath otherwise *decreed*, for his decrees and judgements are *not onely past finding out*, but irrevocable. *There are many devices in mans heart* (saith the wise man) *but the Lords counsel shall stand.* So saith God by the Prophet, *My counsel shall stand, and I* Ro. 11. 33. Pro 19. 21.

will do all my pleaſure. Therefore
Heb. 6. 17. the Apoſtle calls it the *immutabilty of his counſell*, it cannot be changed.
Wee may ſee this in the deſtructi-
Gen. 19. on of *Sodom*. *Abraham* earneſtly prayed to God to ſpare it, he was heard, yet his ſuit was not granted. *David* prayed for the life of the young childe, which he begot of
2. Sam. 12. 16. 19 *Bathſheba* in adultery, hee was heard, but his requeſt was not granted, for
Luk. 22. 42. the childe died. *Our Saviour* prayed *to remove the cup*, God heard him, but he drunk of the bitter cup
Act. 2. 23. of death. Saint *Peter* gives the reaſon; It *was the determinate counſell and foreknowledge of God*, that hee ſhould ſuffer death for the redemption of mankinde. The *Jews* (in *Jeremies* time) had grievouſly and impenitently ſinned againſt God, he decreed utterly to caſt them out of
Jer. 15. 1. his favour, and ſaid, *Though Moſes and Samuel ſtood before me, yet my minde could not bee towards this people.*

And have not wee in this land committed as great ſinnes as they? Let us examine our ſelves impartially, and there's no queſtion but we ſhall finde

finde our ſelves as guilty of offending the Majeſtie of God, as rebellious to his commands, as unthankfull for his mercies, as impenitent for all our offences as the *Jews*, or any *Nation* under heaven: and therefore are deſervedly, under as great *judgements* as they were.

What courſe is then to be taken by us, to appeaſe the wrath of an angry God juſtly conceived againſt us? Certainly none other but the means which hath been ever applied in the like caſe, which is *Prayer*. We being in the ſame condition, why ſhould we not apply the ſame remedy. *Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that wee periſh not?* God is the ſame that he ever was and proclaimed himſelf. *The Lord, The Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſſe and truth.* If wee turn to him by ſerious repentance, and by *Prayer*, qualified with zeal, faith, confidence and perſeverance, conforming our wills unto his onely, Jon. 3 9

waving all worth and merits in our ſelves, and our prayers, and acknowledging our own unworthyneſſe, and truſting in the merits of our bleſſed Saviour *Chriſt Jeſus* onely, with full reſolution to amend our lives for the future, he will ſay to us, as he hath done before, *At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it. If that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

Jer. 18. 7. 8

Let us therefore humble our ſelves, and that ſpeedily. (It was the Prophets counſel to *Judah*) *Gather your ſelves together, yea gather together O nation not deſired. Before the decree bring forth, before the day paſſe as the chaffe, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lords anger come upon you.* Pacifie the Lords wrath before it break out. It's kindled already, we know; but if it once break out into flame, and that a fierce one, who can quench it? *The Lord* (ſaith the Prophet) *hath powred out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foun-*

Zep. 2. 1. 2.

Lam. 4. 11.

dations

dations thereof. If the *foundations* be deſtroyed, the *ſuperſtructure* muſt needs fail, that is an univerſall deſtruction muſt needs follow.

That we may in time prevent this, let us *pray* to God in the firſt place to give us grace to pray aright, and then to give a bleſſing even that wee pray for; his favour and the light of his countenance: and then wee ſhall enjoy our hearts deſire: Let us pray and ſay, *Da pacem domine in diebus noſtris*, peace here, and hereafter: peace of conſcience, peace with God and man: let the judgement of warre ceaſe in this land, and *Da nobis domine panem quotidianum* our daily bread, food and ſuſtenance; remove the judgements of famine and peſtilence Lord from us: and continue us in health; give ſuch things as will ſtand with thy good pleaſure to give us. Give us the *Bread of life*, even *Chriſt*]*c. 6. 35.*
Jeſus, that ſo we may ſerve thee joyfully here in the Kingdome of grace, and raigne with thee eternally in the Kingdome of glory.

Auguſt. *Ne deficias in oratione, Deus quod conceſſurus eſt, ſi differt, non aufert: Nemo gratis orat. Omnis oratio modo ſeria ſit, ſemper fructuoſa erit.*

Faint not in Prayer. God doth onely deferre, not deprive us of that he intends to give us. No man prayeth in vain. Every Prayer alwayes returns with fruit, ſo it be ſerious.

PRAYERS FOR THE TIMES.

For Peace.

O Almighty God and moſt merciſull Father, who by thy Son Jeſus Chriſt haſt valued *Peace* at ſo high a rate, that thou haſt ſtiled the lovers and procurers thereof *the Children* of thee O *God*: the laſt Legacy of thy Sonne to his diſciples being *Peace*: and thou thy ſelf being alſo pleaſed to be intituled *the God of Peace*; it being one of the *fruits* of God the holy *Spirit*: behold we beſeech thee thy poor and wretched people, deprived of this unvaluable bleſſing, and miſerably afflicted with a raging inteſtine *Warre*. Wee confeſſe O Lord that this judgement is juſtly befalne us, for our manifold and grievous ſins; among which our unthankfulnes for, and not making true uſe of ſo happy a peace which we ſo long enjoyed, is not the leaſt.

And now O Lord, in that neither thy promiſes could allure us, nor thy threats and menaces terrifie us, nor thy judgements upon our neighbouring and other Nations, forewarne us of what might come upon us, but that our rebellions tranſcend all former preſidents; thou haſt ſuffered thy whole diſpleaſure to ariſe againſt us, and cauſed us as inſtruments of thy wrath to execute thy vengeance upon our ſelves, according to that
Iſa. 19. 2. in the Prophet, *They ſhall fight every one againſt his brother, and every one againſt his neighbour, and city againſt city.* And we have felt the curſes threatned in thy law, againſt rebellious ſinners, to have taken
Deut. 28. 31 hold upon us. *Thine oxe ſhall be ſlain before thine eyes, and thou ſhalt not eat thereof: Thine aſſe ſhall be violently taken from before thy face, and ſhall not be reſtored to thee. Thou ſhalt*
41. *beget ſonnes and daughters, but thou ſhalt not enjoy them; all theſe curſes ſhall come upon thee,* (with many more there threatned) *till thou be deſtroy-*
45. *ed, becauſe thou haſt not hearkned to the voice of the Lord thy God.*

O Lord wee cannot but confeſſe, that thou art juſt and thy judgments upright; yet wee humby beſeech thee, not to look upon us as *ſinners*, but as thy *Children*. Correct us as a mercifull *Father* to amend us, not as a ſevere *judge* utterly to conſume us: but ſtop we pray thee this iſſue of blood in the land, before all the veines of it be empty, and the whole Nation faint and periſh. Thou art our onely refuge, therefore we flee to thee to releeve us. And Lord we pray with thy ſervant *David*, that (if thou haſt determined yet further to humble us for our rebellions and backſlidings) thou wouldſt chaſtiſe us thy ſelf. *Let us fall into thy hands (for thy mercies are great) and let us not fall into the hand of man*: for *the mercies of the wicked are cruel.* 2.Sa 24.14. Pro.12.10.

Lord we are ready to ſinke under this heavy judgement: If therefore it may ſtand with thy good pleaſure, remove it from us. Suppreſſe thoſe that are inſtruments in it. *Scatter the people that delight in warre.* Diſſipate and fruſtrare their counſels: *Let them be as chaffe before the winde, and let the* Pſal.68.30. Pſal 35.5.

Angel

Angel of the Lord chaſe them that are implacable enemies to peace.

Unite O Lord the mindes and affections of the Nation, and let them be all as one Man. Suffer not the hearts of thoſe that are brethren, and *members of one body* whereof Chriſt Jeſus is *the head*; to bee any longer hardned againſt each other (*a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand*) but give us all the ſpirit of meekneſſe, patience, and brotherly love. Take from us all ſelf-ends, and private intereſts, that we may all unanimouſly ſeek thy glory, and this Kingdoms welfare.

1 Cor. 6. 15

Mar. 3. 23.

Pſal. 72. 1. *Give the King thy judgements O Lord, and thy righteouſneſſe to the Kings Sonne*: bleſſe them, the Queen and the reſt of the Royall ſtem with all the graces of thy *holy Spirit*: bleſſe the Fathers and Miniſters of thy Word and Sacraments, with *zeal and piety*. Reſtore incorrupt *Doctrine* and holy diſcipline to the *Church*, and in thy good time, a ſetled and religious *Peace* to this dying, periſhing Kingdom. Bleſſe all our Magiſtrates and Counſellours with

wiſdom

wiſdom, knowledge and integrity: bleſſe all thy people with true faith and *obedience*, and grant us all, high and low, the ſpirit of unity and *charity*, that we may agree in a bleſſed and acceptable harmony to praiſe thy holy *Name*, for all thy mercies to us in *Chriſt Jeſus*. Amen.

Another.

O Lord Father of mercies, the God of peace, unity, and love. *How long* wee beſeech thee *wilt thou bee angry againſt the prayer of thy people?* How long will it be ere thou remove this unnaturall and execrable warre? Look upon the afflictions of thy people, give ear to the ſighes, teares, and groanes of the poore, and let the effuſion of ſo much Chriſtian blood move thee to pity. Pſal. 80. 4.

Alas

Alas O Lord we acknowledge, that this and other thy judgements are just punishments for our sinnes: we have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have despised and forsaken thee, the fountain of life, and our own happinesse, and have waged warre against thee and thy commandments, by our daily offences. We have kept none of thy statutes, (which according to thy word by the Prophet) hath *brought* the *sword* into our land *to devoure us*.

Isa. 1. 20.

Yet thou O Lord in the midst of *thy wrath remember mercy*. Which that we may be capable of, give us grace to call to our remembrance, to confesse, bewaile and forsake our transgressions. Send into our hearts the spirit of grace and supplication, that we may humbly deprecate thy just displeasure, and cry unto thee and say *Lord pity*, *Lord save thy people* whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

Hab. 3. 2.

Lord sheath this bloody and devouring sword, and let us not fall (as *Saul* did) upon our own *swords*.

Command

Command all thoſe that miniſter occaſions of warre, to return to their own places, that ſo by thy grace and favour, through the merits of our alone *Saviour*, we may again recover (if it ſtand with thy good will and pleaſure) our loſt happy and moſt deſired *peace*, and agree again (as becometh Chriſtians) in unity of hearts and mindes to praiſe and glorifie thy holy Name for ever. Amen.

In this time of unſeaſonable weather, dearth and ſcarcity.

ALmighty Lord God, which giveſt food to every living thing, that covereſt the heaven with clouds, and prepareſt rain for the earth, that commandeſt the clouds to ſend forth rain, and again doeſt ſtop the floodgates of heaven: who at the prayer of thy Prophet *Elias*, didſt ſhut the cataracts thereof, ſo that it rained not in three yeers ſpace. and didſt again open them, and the clouds did yeeld plentifull ſhowers, one for the

the peoples good, the other for their punishment Wee confidently beleeve, that thou doest what thou pleasest in heaven, in earth, in the sea, and all places.

Wee thy poor distressed and miserable Creatures humbly acknowledge and confesse, that wee have departed from thee, and have not hearkned to thy word, to walk in thy commandments. Wee have spent the dayes appointed for thy seruice in idlenesse and excesse, and neglected thy worship, letting loose the reynes of the flesh to all uncleanesse. Therefore that curse denounced in thy law for such rebellion hath befalne us. *That wee should bee cursed in the city, and cursed in the field, in our store, in the fruit of our body, and of our land, in the encrease of our kine, and the flocks of our sheep. And that the heaven over our head should bee brasse, and the earth under us iron. And that the rain should come down till we be destroyed.*

Deut. 28. 16. &c.

O Lord we have seen with ioy and comfort that in the former parts & seasons of the year the earth was plentifully

ly cloathed with fruits in abundance, which filled us with hopes and expectation of a plentifull harveſt, and a numerous encreaſe of all things for the ſuſtentation of man and beaſt. But O Lord (thankful hearts not accompaneing our joyful minds) thou haſt broken up the ſprings of the earth, thou haſt opened the windows of heaven, and immoderate rains have fallen, whereby the land hath been overmoiſtned, the corn hath been depreſſed and laid flat to the ground, and for want of the comfort and heat of the Sunne, hath not attained to its due ripening; and the waters have overflowed the earth ſo much, that our cattell are like to want neceſſary food and ſuſtentation; ſo that all our former hopes ſeem to be fruſtrate: and unleſſe thou of thy ſpeciall providence be mercifull to us, the labours of our hands will prove altogether vain, *and our hopes will be as thiſtle-down, which is carried away with the winde, and as the froth, which is driven away with a ſtorm, and as the ſmoak, which is diſperſed here and there with a tempeſt*, and wee may juſtly fear a famine to enſue. Sap. 5. 14.

When

When O Lord we ſee, and feel theſe extraordinary tempeſts and rains, wee cannot but acknowledge thy juſt hand upon us for our ingratitude, in not giving thee due praiſe for former plentifull yeers, and ſeaſonable times, and for our sleighting and undervaluing ſo great blessings: as alſo, that thou art enforced to draw us to thee by more ſevere means: and to learn by thoſe thy plagues, that mans labour avails nothing without thy blesſing, and that if thou withdraw thy hand of providence, all our endeavours prove invalid and uneffectuall, and therefore we ſhould not undertake any thing, without addreſſe to thee by prayer; and when thy heavy hand is upon us, in this, or any other kinde, to betake our ſelves to no other means, then calling upon thy holy Name to releeue us.

At this time therefore, lying under this ſcourge of thine, we flee unto thee O mercifull Father, wee tender our humble ſupplications to thee: and earneſtly in thy Sonnes Name, and for his Merits, beſeech thee, (if it ſtand with thy bleſſed will)

will) to keep back the bitter judgement of dearth and famine, which wee have juſt cauſe to fear. O deal not with us in thy fury, but bee pleaſed, that we may enjoy thoſe fruits of the earth, which thou didſt put us in hope to receive. Supply O Lord what wee ſhall want, by ſome way or means, which thou in thy providence doeſt better know to give, then wee to expect. *Thy hand is not ſhortned, that it cannot help.* Isa. 59. 1. And it is all one to thee, to releeve us, either with, or without means.

Lord abate in us all immoderate deſires to the creatures, which (with other our tranſgreſſions) hath cauſed this judgement of famine to beginne to take hold upon us. Divert theſe intemperate ſhowers into our eyes, and extract ſhowers of tears from them, which may teſtifie, that wee unfeignedly bewaile our ſinnes, and deplore our manifold offences. Theſe ſhowers will prove farre better, and more wholſome and profitable for us, and be a meanes (by the interceſſion of our Saviour) to ſtay and ceaſe thoſe ſtormes which ſeem to foretell our deſtruction and ruine.

Eord

Lord hear us, and answer us, for thy son Christ Jesus sake, *in whom thou art alone well pleased.* Amen.

FINIS.